

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: 3/10/71

FROM : SAC, TAMPA (120-NEW)

SUBJECT: BETTY GRISSOM versus  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CORPORATION  
OF NEVADA, ROCKWELL STANDARD  
COMPANY OF DELAWARE, NORTH  
AMERICAN AVIATION, INC. OF DELAWARE  
FTCA

For information Bureau, (the North American Aviation, Inc., and North American Rockwell Corp., Inc., both of Delaware, have petitioned the U. S. Federal Court in Orlando to assume jurisdiction in a \$10,000,000.00 damage suit filed by BETTY GRISSOM of Houston, Texas, widow of deceased astronaut VIRGIL I. "GUS" GRISSOM.) According to the newspaper article, GRISSOM had filed suit in Brevard County Circuit Court, and the newspaper stated that Federal Court officials said unless Mrs. GRISSOM contests removing the suit from Brevard County, Federal Court will automatically have jurisdiction over it.

Tampa is opening an FTCA case to insure Bureau interest in this matter.

2 - Bureau  
2 - Tampa  
FBS:av  
(4)

157-105

REC-56

MCT-5

120-10324-1

17 MAR 12 1971

55 MAR 23 1971



DIRECTOR, FBI (120-10324)

6/29/71

*S/S*  
SAC, TAMPA (120-205) (P)

*1.6*  
BETTY GRISSON VS.  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CORP., OF  
NEVADA;  
ROCKWELL STANDARD COMPANY  
OF DELAWARE;  
NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, INC.  
FTCA  
OO:TP  
Bufile 120-10324

Re Tampa letter to Bureau 3/10/71.

A review of the files and docket of U.S.D.C.  
Orlando, Fla. as made available to SA [redacted]  
by Deputy Clerk [redacted] U.S.D.C., Orlando, disclosed  
as follows:

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b7c

Case entitled BETTY GRISSON as Executrix of the Estate of VIRGIL L. GRISSON, deceased, Plaintiff vs. North American Aviation, Inc., a foreign corporation; North American Rockwell Corporation, a foreign corporation; Rockwell Standard Corporation, a foreign corporation; and Rockwell Standard Company, a foreign corporation, Defendants, Case #71-22-Orl. Civ.

*ld*  
On February 11, 1971, North American Aviation Inc. (NAA) and North American Rockwell Corporation (NARC) filed in USDC, Orlando, Fla., a Joint Petition for Removal of this action from where it had previously been filed in the Circuit Court, 18th Judicial District of Florida, Brevard County, Civil Action #54771 to the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division.

*X-109*  
REC 17/20-10324-2  
Various exhibits were attached to the Joint Petition among them being Exhibit A entitled Plaintiffs Complaint, filed 1/18/71, in Circuit Court, Brevard County, Fla. case #54771.

JUL 6 1971

This exhibit asked \$5,000,000.00, due to various damages suffered by Plaintiff be paid to Plaintiff by

2 - Bureau (RM)  
2 - Tampa

2 - Los Angeles (RM)

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TP 120-205

Defendants for death of VIRGIL I. GRISSOM in space craft known as Apollo 204, or Apollo 12, on 1/27/67, while space craft was being put through a "ground test" at John F. Kennedy Space Center, Merritt Island, Fla.

Also reviewed was case entitled, BETTY GRISSOM, a widow Plaintiff vs. same defendants as set forth in case 71-22-Orl. Civ. above.

This case in which BETTY GRISSOM is listed as a widow bears case #71-23-Orl. Civ.

A Joint Petition was also filed 2/11/71, by NAA and NARC to have matter removed from Circuit Court, Brevard County, Fla. to USDC, Orlando, with case number of matter in circuit court, Brevard County, being shown as #54770.

Also attached on the latter case (71-23-Orl.Civ) was Exhibit "A" asking damages in amount of \$5,000,000.00 be paid to Plaintiff for reasons as set out in 71-22-Orl.Civ. above.

The matter was accepted by USDJ GEORGE C. YOUNG, USDC, Orlando, however on 5/11/71, Judge YOUNG ruled that Mrs. GRISSOM's claim had not been filed within two years after the accident and dismissed her suit in the amount of \$5,000,000.00 which she brought in her capacity as widow case 71-23-Orl.Civ. above. Case #71-22-Orl.Civ. in which Mrs. GRISSOM asked for a \$5,000,000.00 damages as Executrix of the estate of VIRGIL I. GRISSOM, deceased is still pending, however no court action is scheduled at the present.

The issue of the Orlando Sentinel, a daily newspaper of Orlando, Fla. on 5/26/71, set forth that a third \$5,000,000 damage suit was filed on 5/25/71, against North American Rockwell Corp. by the family of VIRGIL I. GRISSOM. The identity of the individual plaintiffs is not shown nor it is shown clearly in which court the suit was filed in Los Angeles.

#### LEADS

#### LOS ANGELES DIVISION

#### AT LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

Will if not already done determine if above suit described as filed in Los Angeles on 5/25/71, was filed in U.S.D.C., Los Angeles and if so, will report court action taken USDC, to insure Bureau's interest and will furnish any investigative assistance needed by USA's Office.

TP 120=205

TAMPA DIV. AT ORLANDO, FLA.

The Tampa Office at Orlando, Fla. will report court action taken USDC in Case #71-22-Orl.Civ. and will furnish any investigative assistance needed by USA's Office.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (120-10324)

DATE: 7/20/71

FROM : SAC, LOS ANGELES (120-1023) (RUC)

SUBJECT: BETTY GRISSOM VS.  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CORPORATION  
OF NEVADA;  
ROCKWELL STANDARD COMPANY  
OF DELAWARE;  
NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, INC.  
FTCA  
OO: Tampa

Re Tampa letter to the Bureau dated 6/29/71.

The following investigation was conducted at  
Los Angeles, California, on 7/13/71, by SA [REDACTED]

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A check of the United States District Court  
(USDC) Clerk's Office, Los Angeles, California, disclosed  
no record of any suit filed against North Americal  
Rockwell Corporation by the family of VIRGIL I. GRISSOM.  
There was no record of any file in the name of GRISSOM.

A check in the Civil Division of the United  
States Attorney's (USA's) Office, Los Angeles, disclosed  
no record of any civil action in this division relative  
to GRISSOM.

[REDACTED] Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [REDACTED]  
Civil Division, USA's Office, advised that she  
recalled having read a newspaper article some weeks ago  
concerning this matter and it was her recollection that  
the suit had been filed in some other district other than  
Los Angeles.

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b7C

- 2 - Bureau
- 2 - Tampa (120-205)
- 1 - Los Angeles

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(5)

REC-13 / 120-10324-3

EX-115

22 JUL 23 1971

*[Handwritten signature]*  
SLX



60 JUL 2 1971

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Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

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SUBJECT: BETTY GRISSOM, VS  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CORP. OF NEVADA;  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CO. OF DELAWARE;  
NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, INC.  
FTCA

## \$5 MILLION SUIT IN DEATH OF GRISSOM IS DISMISSED

ORLANDO, Fla. (UPI)—A \$5 million damage suit filed by the widow of astronaut Virgil Grissom has been dismissed in federal court on grounds it was filed after the statute of limitations expired. A second damage suit still is pending.

The suit by Betty Grissom, filed Feb. 18, charged North American Rockwell Corp. and several of its subsidiaries with negligence in the death of her husband in a fire during a launch simulation at Cape Kennedy.

Grissom and fellow astronauts Edward White and Roger Chaffee were killed Jan. 27, 1967, when a fire flashed through their spacecraft.

Mrs. Grissom, mother of two sons, charged North American Rockwell was guilty of negligence in the fire, which she said was caused by faulty wiring and design.

A parallel \$5 million suit was filed by Mrs. Grissom as administrator of the Grissom estate. Attorneys for North American Rockwell did not file dismissal motions on that suit and it still is pending.

THE EVENING STAR  
Washington, D. C., Wednesday, May 12, 1971

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File: 120-10324

55 JUN 7 1971  
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Date: 8/27/71

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL  
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (120-10324)

FROM: SAC, TAMPA (120-205) (P)

BETTY GRISSOM VS.  
 ROCKWELL STANDARD CORPORATION  
 OF NEVADA;  
 ROCKWELL STANDARD COMPANY  
 OF DELAWARE;  
 NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, INC.  
 FTCA  
 OO:TAMPA

Re Tampa letter to Bureau, 6/29/71, and Los Angeles letter to Bureau, 7/20/71.

A review of the file in the Office of the Clerk of the Court, USDC, MDF, Orlando, Florida, disclosed no action has been taken in instant matter and no new documents or petitions have been found in this matter.

A review of the cases in the USA's Office, MDF, Orlando, Florida, revealed that a case has not been opened in this matter. Both AUSA's in the Orlando office of the USA's Office, were unavailable for comment as to any action they may desire in this matter.

LEADS:TAMPA DIVISIONAT ORLANDO, FLORIDA

1. Will maintain contact with the Office of the USA for any assistance he may need in this matter.

2. Will continue review of the file in the Office of the Clerk of the Court, USDC, MDF, in Case Number 71-22-ORL-CID. for any action that may have been taken in this matter.

② - Bureau  
 2 - Tampa

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Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Agent in Charge

Sent \_\_\_\_\_

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Per \_\_\_\_\_

SEP 7 1971 F411

AUG 31 1971

F B I

Date: 2/29/72

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL  
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (120-10324)

FROM: SAC, TAMPA (120-205) (C)

BETTY GRISSOM VS.  
ROCKWELL STANDARD CORPORATION  
OF NEVADA;  
ROCKWELL STANDARD COMPANY  
OF DELAWARE;  
NORTH AMERICAN AVIATION, INC.  
FTCA  
(OO:TP)

A review of the file in the Office of the Clerk of the Court, USDC, MDF, Orlando, Fla., disclosed no action has been taken in instant matter, no new documents or petitions have been filed in this matter and the U.S. Government has not been made a party to this matter.

A review of the cases in the USA's Office, MDF, Orlando, Fla., revealed that a case has not been opened concerning instant matter.

In view of the above, this matter is being considered closed by the Tampa Division at this time and in the event that the U.S. Government is made a party to this matter, this case will then be reopened and assigned for investigative action.

2 - Bureau  
1 - Tampa  
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120-10324-5

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Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Agent in Charge

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Per \_\_\_\_\_